

THE  
WISDOM OF THE EAST  
SERIES

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**THE WISDOM OF THE EAST SERIES**

**EDITED BY**

**L. CRANMER-BYNG, F.R.S.A.  
ALAN W. WATTS**

**THE PERSIAN MYSTICS**



# The Persian Mystics

*The Invocations of Sheikh 'Abdullāh  
Ansāri of Herat, A.D. 1005-1090*

By Sardar Sir Jogendra Singh



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## EDITORIAL NOTE

*THE object of the editors of this series is a very definite one. They desire above all things that in their humble way, these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West, the old world of Thought, and the new of Action. They are confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.*

L. CRANMER-BYNG.  
ALAN W. WATTS.

50, ALBEMARLE STREET,  
LONDON, W.1.



## *Foreword*

SIR JOGENDRA SINGH is to be congratulated on having given us his rendering into English of the Sayings of the Mystic 'Abdullāh Ansāri. Islam has given the world mystics no less than Hinduism or Christianity. In these days when irreligion masquerades as religion, it is well to remind ourselves of what the best mind of all the religions of the world has thought and said. We must not, like the frog in the well, who imagines that the universe ends with the wall surrounding his well, think that our religion alone represents the whole Truth and all the others are false. A reverent study of the other religions of the world would show that they are equally true as our own, though all are necessarily imperfect.

M. K. GANDHI.



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*The  
Persian Mystics:  
Ansāri*



## *Introduction*

My friend Raja Sir Daljeet Singh handed over to me one day the sayings, in Persian, of 'Abdullāh Ansāri. He had discovered and treasured them, and now he offered to share his treasure with me. It was a real gift, for which I am deeply grateful.

I feel that these sayings contain true advice to guide the Pilgrim along the path of discipleship to the Temple of Peace. They come from the heart of a man who himself had trodden the path and found what his heart desired.

'Abdullāh Ansāri had seen and experienced what is hidden from other eyes. His discovery proved that Truth is unchanging and that those who find it, in all ages and in all times, speak with unchallenged unanimity. They do not argue, but affirm, that anyone who is in earnest can lift the veil and resolve for himself the mysteries of life. 'Abdullāh Ansāri does not expound or explain, he simply states facts. His facts however are not within the cognition of those whose consciousness has not been freed from the clouding of the senses.

## INTRODUCTION

It is held that when a Seeker gives his heart and mind to the search, and disperses the mists that arise from tumultuous passions, Truth becomes brighter and brighter and fills the Soul with its light.

It is asserted that while reason is puzzling itself about mystery of consciousness, time, and space, the man of Faith is going forward from discovery to discovery, in the growing illumination of his heart.

But it must be recognised that this knowledge is only available to those whose eyes are fixed, like an archer, on the arrow and the object at which he aims, and that without purity of purpose and unceasing effort deliverance cannot be obtained.

In all ages and in all times men have sought and found truth. They have shown the way and means of attainment. But men have listened to the message with incredulity and continued the mad pursuit of sense objects.

Passions of body and mind govern men and kindle fires of desire, of greed, attachment, egoism and anger. These enslave and obscure the mind which must be freed, and restored to its pristine purity to reflect truth. The seekers of truth, therefore, concentrate all their strength in drawing away the mind from sense objects and to set it free from the dominations of fear and hate. Some follow the path of knowledge, and others the path

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of devotion, hoping to lose all sense of duality in the supreme uprising of love.

The world-forsakers are something of an enigma to world-seekers. The truth is that a Yogi or a Sufi gives up that which has no real value. He says that the bewildering fascination of the world is like the thirst of a deer in a desert, which drives it to follow shadows of a mirage, phantoms of water and trees and mocking cities that vanish when approached. According to him :

“ What is its joy, what is its woe  
But scented ash, that used to glow ?  
A sandal wood of long ago.  
A camphor of the past.”

These God-filled men carry an aroma of sweetness and peace ; of radiant joy and absolute serenity, in a restless world, having drunk from the source of life itself. The Ego no more drives them.

Mystics declare life to be a journey over an unknown path which is as straight and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that of faith to guide the seeker, no sustenance but devotion. The track ahead cannot be seen. Going is uncertain, and pitfalls await the unwary. The seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a candle to grope in the gloom or seek the

## INTRODUCTION

rush-light of reason. He must go steadily forward, in the hope of reaching a great illumination, which awaits him at the journey's end.

There is no religion which has been without its mystics, men who, by their devotion, have unravelled the mystery of life and found God. They have spoken with no uncertain voice of the Truth that has been revealed to them.

It would profit little to dwell on the system of Sufism. Volumes have been written in Persian and other languages on the subject. It is not a system really. It is a way of life. It is beyond the range of reason. It cannot be comprehended, but it can be realised.

I would rather let Ansāri speak, than overload what he has so simply and directly said with comments of my own, from the shadows of a mind that lacks crystal clearness. I am confident that those who are on the mystic path of discovery will find in his sayings food for the soul.

A great mystic has said :

“ To know the world, is to despise it,  
To know God, is to be lost in His love.”

It seems that in all ages and in all times there come true teachers, who bear witness to the truths of religion,

who speak of what they know, and are ready to share their knowledge with those who are prepared to follow the path of discipleship. The learned and the wise, the priesthood of all creeds, cannot reconcile itself to the direct methods of attainment of the mystics. The learned call these knowers *mystics*, because they cannot bring within the ambit of intellect what is beyond the bounds of intellect; the worldly wise in pursuit of their ambitions suspect their sanity, for they discard what they value most, according to them they preach the giving up of substances for a shadow. The priesthood with whom adherence to fixed ritual replaces the spirit of religion are afraid of their influence, and therefore, these devotees of God, sane, in an insane world, are only understood by those who are ready to follow truth.

The mystics pass like shooting stars, giving light to those who are ready to receive it, and disturbing others, who close their eyes, lest they may be dazzled by its brilliance. Generally the crowd drives them to the cross and the gallows, but 'Abdullah Ansāri seems to have escaped both. Evidently he did not violate rules of rigid orthodoxy and led a life of sweetness, without compromising the truth, that was his, and which is enshrined in his teachings.

Life, for rich and poor alike, is full of joys and sorrows,

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as long as the ego drives and seeks satisfaction in things outside itself. It is a life of ambition, or pleasures of senses, or rivalries, or quest for power, for money, which even when gathered remains sterilised. For he who hoards money, deprives himself of its service. It is only when sickness of the soul grows and fatal fascination of the world fades, that true desire takes birth in the heart and the awakened self seeks the path of salvation.

It is said that an ancestor of 'Abdullāh Ansāri was in the Court of the prophet of Islam, in charge of his horses ; and later came to Herat with Asaf son of Kais. His father, Abu Mansur Mohemed Ansāri, became a permanent resident of Herat.

'Abdullāh Ansāri was born on Friday at sunset in 396 Hijri or A.D. 1005. At the age of nine he displayed a remarkable mastery, and seemed to know all that was known on religion and philosophy ; at the age of fourteen he sat in the company of the learned and discoursed wisely on all the subjects that were under discussion. Very wonderful are the powers that a soul brings with it, its garnered harvest of aeons of experience. 'Abdullāh Ansāri was born with knowledge. He had not to seek and discover it anew. He was an octogenarian when he departed from this earth. It is said

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that he had about a hundred thousand Persian verses by heart, and himself composed 6,000 verses in Arabic. There are four books in Persian which are still studied with reverence. These are *Risala Munajat*—The Book of Prayer, *Tabqat-ul-Sufia*—The Book of Sufies, *Zad-ul-Arfin*—The Book of Saints, *Kitab-i-Israr*—The Book of Mysteries.

He gathered round him a band of devoted disciples, and this society came to be known as *Silsila-i-Ansāri*, and is said to have survived up to the present time.

The following verses describe his soul's journey from material manifestation to spiritual absorption—

“ From the unmanifest I came,  
And pitched my tent  
In the Forest of Material existence.  
I passed through  
Mineral and vegetable kingdoms,  
Then my mental equipment  
Carried me into the animal kingdom ;  
Having reached there I crossed beyond it ;  
Then in the crystal clear shell of human heart  
I nursed the drop of self into a Pearl,  
And in association with good men  
Wandered round the Prayer House,  
And having experienced that, crossed beyond it ;

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Then I took the road that leads to Him,  
And became a slave at His gate;  
Then the duality disappeared  
And I became absorbed in Him."

JOGENDRA SINGH.

AIRA HOLME,  
SIMLA, E.

*11th September, 1938.*

## *The Invocations of 'Abdullāh Ansāri*

IN the name of God,  
Most Gracious,  
Most Merciful.

O Thou Munificent One  
Who art the bestower  
Of all bounties,

O Thou wise One  
Who overlookest our faults,

O Self-existent One  
Who art beyond our comprehension,

O Thou omnipotent One  
Who hast no equal in power and greatness,  
Who art without a second :

O Thou merciful One  
Who guidest stray souls to the right path,  
Thou art truly our God.

## THE INVOCATIONS

Give purity to our minds,  
Aspiration to our hearts,  
Light to our eyes.  
Out of Thy grace and bounty  
Give us that which Thou deemest best.

O Lord, Out of Thy grace give faith and light  
to our hearts.  
And with the medicine of truth and steadfastness  
cure the ills of our life.

I know not what to ask of Thee,  
Thou art the Knower.  
Give that which Thou deemest best.

O Lord ! I have wasted my life,  
Injured my soul,  
And pleased the accursèd Satan.  
My being or not being is of little worth.  
Accept my repentence and forgive my sins,  
Take me from sorrow to happiness.

From the consequence of my past actions  
And perils of the future  
I see no way of escape.  
O Lord ! I am afraid of the evil within me.

AWARENESS IS RAPTURE

Teach me how to save myself  
from the snares of self;  
Take me by the hand,  
For without Thy mercy I have no refuge.

O God, may my brain reel with thoughts of Thee,  
May my heart thrill with the mysteries of Thy grace,  
May my tongue move only to utter  
Thy praise.

I live only to do Thy will,  
My lips move only in praise of Thee,  
O Lord, whoever becometh aware of Thee  
Casteth out all else other than Thee.

He who becometh aware of Thee  
What use hath he for life,  
For children, family or earthly things ?

Whom Thou intoxicatest with Thy love  
On him bestoweth Thou both the worlds.  
But Thy mad devotee,  
What use hath he for both the worlds ?

## THE INVOCATIONS

O Lord, give me a heart  
That I may pour it out in thanksgiving.  
Give me life  
That I may spend it  
in working for the salvation of the world.

O Lord, give me that right discrimination  
That the Lure of the world may cheat me no more.  
Give me strength  
That my faith suffer no eclipse.

O Lord, give me understanding,  
That I stray not from the path.  
Give me light  
To avoid pitfalls.

O Lord, keep watch over me  
That I stray not.  
Keep me on the path of righteousness  
That I escape from the pangs of repentance.

O Lord, judge me not by my actions,  
Of Thy mercy, save me,  
And make my humble efforts fruitful.

### IN ANSWER TO MY PRAYER

O Lord, give me a heart  
Free from the flames of desire.  
Give me a mind  
Free from the waves of dissimulation.

O Lord, give me eyes  
Which see nothing but Thy glory.  
Give me a mind  
That finds delight in Thy service.  
Give me a soul  
Drunk in the wine of Thy wisdom.

O Lord, to find Thee is my desire  
But to comprehend Thee  
Is beyond my strength.  
Remembering Thee is solace  
to my sorrowing heart,  
Thoughts of Thee are my Constant Companions  
I call upon Thee night and day.  
The flame of Thy love glows  
In the darkness of my night.

O Lord, he whom Thou killest doth not smell  
of blood,  
And he whom Thou burnest doth not smell  
of smoke,

## THE INVOCATIONS

For he whom Thou burnest is happy in  
The burning,  
And he whom Thou killest, rejoiceth  
In being killed.

O Lord, though the blue flower be poisonous  
It is of Thy garden,  
And if 'Abdullāh be a sinner  
He is of Thy people.

O Lord, when I think of Thy compassion  
I feel like a crowned king ;  
When I think of my sins  
I am as dust, nay, less than dust.

Life in my body pulsates only for Thee,  
My heart beats in resignation to Thy will.  
If on my dust a tuft of grass were  
To grow  
Every blade would tremble with my devotion  
For Thee.

MY DESIRE

O Lord, every one desires to behold  
Thee,  
I desire  
That Thou mayest cast a glance at me.

Let me not disgrace myself.  
If Thy forgiveness awaits me in the end  
Lower not the standard of forgiveness  
Which Thou hast unfurled.

O Lord, if Thou sendest me to Hell  
I raise no protest.  
And if Thou takest me to Paradise,  
I go there, but not of my own choice.

If in Hell I obtain union with Thee  
What care I for those who dwell in Paradise ?  
And were I called to Heaven without Thee  
The pleasures of Paradise would then  
Be worse than the fires of Hell.

O Lord, prayer at Thy gate  
Is a mere formality :  
Thou knowest what Thy slave desires.

## THE INVOCATIONS

O Lord, better for me to be dust,  
And my name effaced  
From the records of the world,  
Than that Thou forget me.

He knoweth all our good and evil  
Nothing is hidden from Him.  
He knoweth what is best medicine  
To cure the pain,  
And to rescue the fallen.  
Be humble, for He exalteth the humble.

I am intoxicated with love of Thee  
And need no fermented wine.  
I am Thy bird  
Free from need of seed  
And safe from the snare of the fowler.  
In the Kaba and in the Temple  
Thou art the object of my search.  
Else I am freed  
From both these places of worship.

O Lord, when the fire of separation was burning me  
Why didst Thou light the fire of Hell ?

## FEVER OF LIFE

Lord, when Thou wert hidden from me  
The fever of life possessed me.  
When Thou revealest Thyself  
This fever of life departeth.

O Lord, other men are afraid of Thee  
But I—I am afraid of myself,  
From Thee flows good alone,  
From me flows evil.

Each day I recall the day,  
That is left behind.  
Sorrowing over my misdeeds  
The dread of my doings drives me to despair.  
The thought of Thy mercy  
Is the only solace of my heart.

Others fear what the morrow  
May bring.  
I am afraid of what happened yesterday. -

O Lord, if Thou holdest me responsible for  
My sins  
I shall cling to Thee for Thy Grace.

## THE INVOCATIONS

I with my sin, am an insignificant atom.  
Thy Grace is resplendent as the Sun.

O Lord, out of regard for Thy name,  
The qualities which are Thine,  
Out of regard for Thy greatness,  
Listen to my cry  
For Thou alone canst redeem me.

O Lord, intoxicate me with the wine  
Of Thy love.

Place the chains of Thy slavery on  
My feet ;  
Make me empty of all but Thy love,  
And in it destroy me and bring me  
Back to life.

The hunger Thou has awakened, culminates  
In fulfilment.

Make my body impervious to the fires  
Of Hell ;  
Vouchsafe to me a vision of Thee in Heaven.  
The spark Thou hast kindled make it  
Everlasting.

## HELP OF THE HELPLESS

I think of no other,  
And in Thy love care for none else.  
None has a place in my heart but Thee.  
My heart has become Thy abode,  
It has no place for another.

O Lord, Thou cherishest the helpless  
And I am helpless,  
Apply Thy balm to my bleeding heart  
For Thou art the physician.

O Lord, I, a beggar, ask of Thee  
More than what a thousand kings may ask of Thee ;  
Each one has something he needs to ask of Thee,  
I have come to ask Thee to give me Thyself.

If words can establish a claim  
I claim a crown.  
But if deeds are wanted, I am as helpless as  
The ant.

Urged by desire I wandered in the streets  
Of good and evil,  
I gained nothing except feeding the fire of desire.

## THE INVOCATIONS

As long as in me remains the breath of life  
Help me, for Thou alone canst hear my prayer.

My friend, wisdom lies  
In abandoning heedlessness,  
In turning the heart away from the worldly objects,  
And in gathering provision for the hereafter  
Before departure from this earth.

Someone asked the Holy Prophet—  
“ What dost thou say concerning the things of the world ? ”  
The Prophet said—“ What can I say about them :  
Things which are acquired with hard labour,  
Preserved with perpetual watchfulness,  
And left with regret.”

My friend, the world is not a place  
For enjoyment,  
But a place where humanity is on trial.  
The world is a mere crossing  
And not an abiding city of delight.

## THIS UNABIDING WORLD

O mendicant, man is doomed to death  
And has to leave the world.

Dost thou take the world for a friend  
Or foe ?  
If thou holdest it a friend,  
Know that it will not last.  
If thou holdest it to be a foe, consume it,  
So that it may not last.

Behold what thou art, and whence thou  
Hast come.  
Beware what thou doest and whither  
Thou wouldest go,  
If thou treadest the path of lust and longing  
Thou shalt go without fruit and without good name.

My friend, put not thy reliance  
On three things :  
On heart, on time and on life.  
The heart is easily tempted,  
Time is always in a state of flux,  
The sands of life run out.

## THE INVOCATIONS

My friend, make an effort,  
That thou mayest become a man,  
And gather treasures  
Of feeling for others,  
So that with the favour of saints  
And by the blessings of waiting on them  
Thy cheeks may grow pale,  
And love of the world grow  
Cold in thy heart.

If thou wishest to become a man  
In the world,  
In the path of religion  
Learn to feel for others,  
Night and day attend on holy men.  
When thou hast become like dust  
Of their feet  
Thou shalt become a man.

O man, remember death at all times ;  
Renounce all discord and tyranny ;  
Deem what has not been done as done,  
And what has been done as not done.

## THE INNER AND OUTER TEMPLE

Watch vigilantly the state of  
Thine own mind.

Love of God begins in  
Harmlessness.

Know that the Prophet built an external Kaba  
Of clay and water,  
And an inner Kaba in life and heart.  
The outer Kaba was built by Abraham,  
The Holy ;  
The inner is sanctified by the glory of  
God Himself.

On the path of God  
Two places of worship mark the stages.  
The material temple,  
And the temple of the heart.  
Make your best endeavour  
To worship at the temple of the heart.

O mendicant, paradise is only an  
Allurement ;  
The real objective is  
the house of God Himself.

## THE INVOCATIONS

Fasting only means the saving of bread,  
Formal prayer is the business  
Of old men and women,  
Pilgrimage is a pleasure of the world.  
Conquer the heart,  
Its subjection is conquest indeed.

If thou canst walk on water  
Thou art no better than a straw.  
If thou canst fly in air  
Thou art no better than a fly.  
Conquer thy heart  
That thou mayest become somebody.

One man spends seventy years in learning  
And fails to kindle the light.  
Another, all his life learns nothing  
But hears one word  
And is consumed by that word.

On this path argument is of no avail ;  
Seek, and thou mayest find the truth.

Helpless in childhood,  
Intoxicated in youth,

## SPRINGS OF HUMAN SORROW

And decrepit in old age ;  
Then, O helpless one, when couldst thou  
Worship God ?

Alas ! alas, for the master-craftsman's ways :  
From the same iron he forges a horse-shoe  
As well as a mirror for the Emperor.

My friend, see thine own faults ;  
The faults of others,  
For thee they are not.  
Make thy heart forgiving ;  
Nor sell thy soul for the fruits of the world.

It is wrong to consider oneself above all others  
And to exalt one's self.  
Learn from the pupil of thine eye  
To see others, but to thyself be blind.

Know friend,  
Human sorrow springs from three things :  
To want before it is due,  
To want more than the destined share,  
To want for oneself  
What belongs to others.

## THE INVOCATIONS

When Providence has provided thy share  
Separately from others  
Then why art thou jealous,  
And hungering for that which is not for thee ?

Desire for knowledge is the path  
Of honour ;  
Desire for wealth, that of dishonour.

Wealth is the chain which slaves wear  
Knowledge the kingly crown.

The path is narrow and beset by  
Yawning chasms.

Woe to him who is heavily laden with sin  
And walks without the light of faith.

He with whom virtue has become a habit,  
Hath accomplished his work here,  
and hereafter.

The law of life requires :  
1. Sincerity to God.  
2. Severity to self.  
3. Justice to all people.  
4. Service to elders.

## SYMBOLS OF MISFORTUNE

5. Kindness to the young.
6. Generosity to the poor.
7. Good counsel to friends.
8. Forbearance with enemies.
9. Indifference to fools.
10. Respect to the learned.

Know that four things are symbols of  
Ill luck :

Ingratitude in good fortune,  
Impatience in ill fortune,  
Discontent with what fate ordains,  
Hesitation in serving fellow-men.

In this path, be a man  
With a heart full of compassion.  
Engage not in vain doing,  
Make not thy home in the street of lust and desire.

If thou wouldst become a pilgrim on the path  
Of love  
The first condition is  
That thou become as humble as dust  
And ashes.

## THE INVOCATIONS

Remove "A" from "Murad" (desire) it becomes  
Murd (man);  
He who renounceth desire becometh a man.

Know that he who desires the things of the  
World  
Is haunted by sorrow.  
He who desires Heaven  
Is a labourer working for wages.  
But, he who desires God,  
Is on the path of glory.

O thou who covetest the world  
How long wilt thou follow the path of sorrow ?  
Even if thou seekest the pleasures of Heaven  
Thy quest is on the wrong trail.  
But if thou seekest God and receivest His seal,  
Thou art victorious in both the worlds.

Know, that when thou learnest to lose thy self  
Thou wilt reach the Beloved.  
There is no other secret to be revealed,  
And more than this is not known to me.

## RAPTUROUS SILENCE

Be humble and cultivate silence.  
If thou hast received, rejoice,  
And fill thyself with ecstasy  
And if not, continue the demand.

Be a rose and not a thorn !  
Be a friend and not an enemy !

To exalt the Beloved is to practise religion ;  
To exalt the self is to practise paganism.

If the seeker is worthy  
Attainment is easy.

The company of a good friend  
is the light of the soul.  
The company of an ungodly person  
Is the poison of life.  
A snake is preferable to a faithless friend.

Were I to abide in fire a hundred  
Years  
That scorching flame would be easier to bear  
Than the company of Godless men ;  
Death is preferable to such company.

## THE INVOCATIONS

What is worship ?  
To realise reality.  
What is the sacred law ?  
To do no evil.  
What is reality ?  
Selflessness.

The heart enquired of the soul  
What is the beginning of this business ?  
What its end, and what its fruit ?  
The soul answered :  
The beginning of it is  
the annihilation of self,  
Its end faithfulness,  
And its fruit immortality.

The heart asked what is annihilation ?  
What is faithfulness ?  
What is immortality ?

The soul answered :  
Freedom from self is annihilation ;  
Faithfulness is  
Fulfilment of love ;  
Immortality is union of immortal  
With mortal.

DUST THAT IS BALM

O Devotee, if thou lovest God truly  
Why dost thou cast longing eyes  
On things other than Him ?

In this path the eye must cease to see,  
And the ear to hear.  
Save unto Him, and about Him.  
Be as dust on His path,  
Even the kings of this earth  
Make the dust of His feet  
The balm of their eyes.

## *The Knower and the Known*

He who knoweth  
This body is of the earth  
Gets rid of pride.

He who knoweth  
God's law prevails  
Is freed from sorrow.

He who knoweth  
Each event is preordained  
Plans no more.

He who knoweth  
All that happens is from Him  
Is freed from tribulation.



THE LOVE THAT FREES

If thou lovest this world,  
It will fail thee.  
If thou lovest God,  
He will set thee free.

Work without fortitude  
Undermines the roots of life.  
Self-indulgent enjoyment  
Only the worldly relish.

Be not courageous in sinning,  
God metes out utter justice.  
Fill not thyself with pride,  
It is not pleasing to God.

Wert thou to know  
The Creator,  
The world could no more  
Hold thee in thrall.

Suffering without resignation  
Is like a burn without the balm.

## THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN

Faith  
That lacks reality  
Is akin to faithlessness.

Blind obedience  
Without the light of knowledge  
Is utter waste of effort,  
Like ploughing the sand.

If thou art freed  
From the cage of this world  
Soar into the Empyrean  
And share the bliss of God.

Do not, O God, put out  
This flickering lamp !  
Cast not this heart afire with love for Thee  
Into the furnace of desire !

Oh ! God ! Rend not  
My patched-up sail,  
Nor drive my broken bark  
From the river of knowledge !

WHERE THOU ART IS HAPPINESS

Eyes that see an enemy  
Are many thousands,  
But the eye that sees a friend  
Is one in a thousand.

Even a prison  
Radiates happiness  
If love for Thee  
Fills the heart.

Blessed is enslavement  
Which compels Thy service,  
Thy bondsmen are happy  
In their bondage.

There are two Kabas :  
The Kaba built on earth,  
And the Kaba of the heart.

The first is the one that the feet  
Of pilgrims frequent ;  
The other is the secret place  
Which Seekers of Truth discover.

## THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN

It is the former  
Which fills the eyes of the faithful ;  
The other only the devotee finds  
Under the eye of God Himself.

The pilgrimage to the earthly Kaba  
Is a matter of formal discipline ;  
The finding of the Kaba of the heart  
Depends on the grace of God.

At the one the pilgrims drink from the well of Zam-Zam ;  
The other unlocks its springs  
To the welling up of sighs.

The earthly Kaba  
Is guarded by the mountain of 'Irfat,  
The temple of the heart  
Is radiant with God's own light.

From the earthly Kaba  
Stone idols were removed ;  
From the Kaba of the heart  
Greed and desire are dethroned.

In this path  
Anguished hearts bleed,  
Like Jacob separated from his son,  
Like Majnun separated from his Laila.

If thou art a wanderer  
From door to door  
Close thine eyes  
To the faults of others.

If thou doest  
Some good deed  
Let it not be known :  
Better far, thy faults were revealed.

Oh ! Friend ! Keep away  
From the ways of oppression ;  
To tyrannise His creation  
Is to forget the Creator.

If thou desirest happiness  
Choke then the springs of sorrow.  
If thou wishest to attain thine object,  
Labour for it without cease.

## THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN

Renounce desire ;  
Overcome evil,  
And rejoice not  
In the misfortune of others.

By harsh words,  
By ridicule or laughter,  
Do not injure the feelings of others,  
Refrain from indulgence in both.

Treat others  
As thou wouldest be treated.  
What thou likest not for thyself  
Dispense not to others.

O ! Man of firm Faith  
Do good and earn the reward.  
Let not ingratitude  
Enter thy heart.

If thou art a wanderer  
In search of Truth  
Betray not thy secret  
To the outer world.

THOU ART THE ONLY GIVER

Why remain a bondsman  
Of greed, or mere speculator  
On the mysteries of life.  
Devotion alone can fulfil thy need.

Be not proud of wealth  
'Tis but temporarily lent.  
Treasure, more than aught else,  
The gift of health.

O God ! Fill me with Thy Grace  
So that the passions of the body  
Assail my mind no more !

Help me, O God !  
For none else can  
Bestow Thy gifts ;  
Thou art the only Giver.

I am aware  
Of my own unworthiness,  
But I am certain  
Of Thy boundless grace.



## THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN

Regard not thyself  
With thine own eye  
Lest it may bring misfortune  
By magnifying the self.

The evil eye of another  
Can be averted,  
There is no escape  
From the evil of one's own.

Satan saw himself  
With his own eye, created out of fire.  
He looked down on Adam  
Created out of earth.

Satan who looked at himself,  
With his own eye, was condemned for ever.  
Adam, on whom he cast an evil eye,  
Craved forgiveness and was redeemed.

'Tis better to be  
Humble as the earth  
Rather than steeped  
In overweening self-conceit.

## WHAT IS THIS LOVE?

When Mansur was imprisoned  
For proclaiming oneness with God,  
His friend Shibli asked him  
“ What is this love ? ”

“ Come to-morrow  
For answer,” he said.  
Shibli obeyed and found Mansur  
Facing the gallows.

Mansur looked at him  
And said, “ Read the answer :  
Love begins in absorbing the ‘ I ’  
And ends thus ” :

“ Its noose tightens  
To squeeze out the self  
Then comes the test of the Cross.  
Stay if thou apprehendest the secret, otherwise go.’

Men are like addicts of drink,  
Unaware of their own state.  
The wise are wide-awake,  
Having cast out the spell.

## THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN

Wealthy men are narrow-hearted,  
Others, discontented for all time,  
Lament their misfortunes  
Real and imagined.

The emancipated are freed  
From bonds of being, and non-being :  
They have broken the cage  
And found their freedom.

They have emptied  
The cup of desire ;  
They strive no more  
For worldly greatness.

Freed from joy and sorrow  
They have found their true self ;  
They dwell for ever more  
In the wondrous realm of God.

If a lame dog  
Finds admission at Thy gate,  
And the weary are refreshed by Thy sight  
No reason have I for despair.

## *Words of Warning*

O ! thou wanderer in the wilderness of the world  
See the graveyards that lie about thee.  
Realise the truth, that life passes,  
And be not heedless, as drunkards are.

Under tomb-stones and in mausoleums sleep  
Thousands that blossomed like the rose,  
And wasted precious days  
In mad pursuit of pleasure.

They too were unwearying  
Planning for Profit and Pastime,  
And attainment of perpetual enjoyment,  
Completely forgetful of the future.

They too ardently desired  
Greatness and Jewelled Diadems ;  
They feasted on dainty dishes  
And drank from goblets of silver and of gold.

## WORDS OF WARNING

They nursed in the soil of their hearts  
The seed of Earthly pleasures,  
Gathering in their Earthly homes  
All the treasures of the Earth.

Suddenly they were called upon  
To drink from the hands of Azrael<sup>1</sup>  
Sherbet of mortality, and enter  
The gate of Death.

They were like bankrupt Bankers  
Leaving their treasures behind  
Gathered from the fields of sufferings  
Their only gain—a sorrowing soul.

Friends, remember always  
That all that lives must die ;  
Therefore prepare for the future,  
Otherwise, Hell is your assured portion.

O, ye heedless young men !  
O, ye ignorant old men, who have learnt nothing !  
Are ye mad not to realise  
The truth of life ?

<sup>1</sup> Azrael, the Angel of Death.

ALL IS TAKEN FROM US

In days of old,  
Before your time,  
I too like you, strode the carpeted earth  
As if it was mine for ever.

I too slept on soft beds,  
And stepped on rugs of velvet ;  
I too held gorgeous banquets,  
And indulged in pleasure

Before I became aware of the peril ;  
The ruin that awaited me,  
The loss of love and affection,  
The waste of gold and wealth.

The cup of life was empty ;  
I was marched out  
Bringing nothing from the world,  
Not even love and loyalty of friends.

My acts and deeds and weary work  
Gathered for me no grace ;  
From friends and family came no help ;  
My hoarded wealth afforded no relief.

## WORDS OF WARNING

Now I am overwhelmed with shame  
How to face the day of Judgment.  
Friendless and forlorn  
I carry nothing with me.

No visitors throng the portals of the grave ;  
No callers come for a pleasant talk ;  
No sound disturbs the silence ;  
My body is turning into a handful of dust.

Pleasures of the world  
Are things of the past ;  
My flesh and skin  
Are an offering to the worms.

When the opportunity was mine  
I had no discrimination  
To seek reality from the unreal.  
I was wrapped in forgetfulness—even as you.

Here I lie under Earth  
My teeth are all scattered ;  
Earth is eating into my limbs,  
Taking them back to herself.

THIS IS THE END OF ME AND THEE

My home is in ruins ;  
The fruits of my labour are swallowed up.  
My children find no place in my house ;  
Another sleeps on my bed.

I now shed tears of repentance,  
And lament over my misdeeds.  
Take warning from me  
And work while there is still time.

The bird of the soul will take wing  
And leave the body untenanted.  
Grass will grow over the grave,  
And perchance a flower unfold.



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